

HIPAA INFORMATION SERIES

1. HIPAA 101 For Health Care Providers' Offices

HIPAA

A Challenge and Opportunity for the Health Care Industry

INFORMATION SERIES TOPICS

- ★ 1. **HIPAA 101**
2. ***Are you a covered entity?***
3. ***Key HIPAA dates and tips for getting ready***
4. ***What electronic transactions and code sets are standardized under HIPAA?***
5. ***Is your software vendor or billing service ready for HIPAA?***
6. ***What to expect from your health plans***
7. ***What do you need to know about testing***
8. ***Trading Partner Agreements***
9. ***Final steps for compliance with Electronic Transactions and Code Sets***
10. ***Enforcement***

The Challenge

The Health Care Industry has experienced dramatic change over the years. As new technologies are adopted and our system has become more complex – so has the administration of health care. Most payers of health care claims have developed their own standards for claims and many other health care transactions. The result is added administrative costs for providers, hundreds of different claims forms and procedures to deal with daily, and complicated computer programs. As a health care provider you know that a provider's office can be required to submit many different types of forms for payment. A process that can frustrate everyone involved - patients, insurers, employers and providers. Opportunities for change have seemed out of reach - until now.

The Opportunity

The law known as "HIPAA" stands for the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996. Congress passed this landmark law to provide consumers with greater access to health care insurance, to protect the privacy of health care data, and to promote more standardization and efficiency in the health care industry.

While HIPAA covers a number of important health care issues, this informational series focuses on the Administrative Simplification portion of the law – specifically HIPAA's Electronic Transactions and Code Set requirements.

There are four parts to HIPAA's Administrative Simplification:

- 1) Electronic Transactions and Code Sets Standards requirements
- 2) Privacy requirements
- 3) Security requirements
- 4) National identifier requirements

This is the first in a series of informational papers designed to help educate health care professionals with the realities of HIPAA. Collectively, the papers provide information, suggestions, tips, guidance and checklists to assist health care providers in understanding what they need to focus on. Each paper provides a general overview of topics that will help guide you through the HIPAA process. From determining whether or not you are a covered entity - to outlining specific deadlines - to implementation - to ultimately the enforcement of the rule - this series aims to provide information and resources that will help you become compliant with HIPAA's Electronic Transactions and Code Sets Standards requirements.

Standard Transactions

1. Claims or equivalent encounter information
2. Payment and remittance advice
3. Claim status inquiry and response
4. Eligibility inquiry and response
5. Referral certification and authorization inquiry and response
6. Enrollment and disenrollment in a health plan
7. Health plan premium payments
8. Coordination of benefits
- Pending approval:*
9. Claims attachments
10. Report of injury

Code Sets

1. Physician services and other health care services - **combination of HCPCS and CPT-4**
2. Medical supplies, orthotics, and DME - **HCPCS**
3. Conditions & other health problems & their manifestations- **ICD-9-CM, Vols 1&2**
4. Dental services – **Code on dental procedures and nomenclature**
5. Drugs/biologics – **NDC for retail pharmacy**

Why HIPAA Administrative Simplification?

HIPAA calls for changes designed to streamline the administration of health care. It requires uniformity and basic standards for all health information. No longer can every insurer or employer have unique requirements for the processing of claims. Everyone will be required to provide the same information -- standard formats for processing claims and payments; as well as for the maintenance and transmission of electronic health care information and data. In the short term, HIPAA will require effort, resources and commitment on the part of providers' offices. In the long run, however, this law has major benefits. Right now, there are over 400 different ways to submit a claim. With HIPAA there will be one way. With these standards in place, your office staff may spend less time on the phone getting information they need. As a result, the standardization of submitting claims and simplification of processes should make getting paid quicker and easier – and less costly. The requirements mandated by HIPAA should also help providers take advantage of new technologies and ultimately improve their overall business practices.

TIP: With HIPAA local codes are replaced by standard national codes

Electronic Transactions and Code Sets Requirements

Transactions are activities involving the transfer of health care information for specific purposes. Under HIPAA Administration Simplification if a health care provider engages in one of the identified transactions, they must comply with the standard for that transaction. HIPAA requires every provider who does business electronically to use the same health care transactions, code sets, and identifiers. HIPAA has identified ten National Standards for Electronic Data Interchange (EDI) for the transmission of health care data. Claims and encounter information, payment and remittance advice, and claims status and inquiry are several of the Electronic Transactions Standards. Review all of the electronic transactions required by HIPAA (listed in the box to the left of this page) and determine what standards are used by your office.



Code sets are the codes used to identify specific diagnosis and clinical procedures on claims and encounter forms. The CPT-4 and ICD-9 codes that you are familiar with are examples of code sets for procedure and diagnosis coding. Other code sets required in HIPAA's Administrative Simplification law include codes used by medical suppliers, dental services and drugs.

Free Information &
Tools Available at
the CMS Web Site

<http://www.cms.hhs.gov/hipaa/hipaa2>

- Covered entity decision tool
- Provider readiness checklist
- CMS Outreach ListServe
- HIPAA roundtable audio conference dates
- HHS HIPAA links
- Instructional videos
- HIPAA press releases
- Complaint form

**For HIPAA
Privacy inquires**

<http://www.hhs.gov/ocr/hipaa/>

or call the Privacy
hotline at :

1-866-627-7748

Other HIPAA

Administrative Simplification Requirements

- Privacy Requirements: The privacy requirements limit the release of patient protected health information (PHI) without the patient's knowledge and consent beyond that required for patient care. Patient's personal information must be more securely guarded and more carefully handled when conducting the business of health care.
- Security Requirements: The security regulation outlines the minimum administrative, technical, and physical safeguards required to prevent unauthorized access to protected health care information. The Department of Health & Human Services published final instructions on security requirements in the Federal Register on February 20, 2003. The compliance dates are April 21, 2005, and April 21, 2006 for small health plans.
- National Identifier Requirements: HIPAA will require that health care providers, health plans, and employers have standard national numbers that identify them on standard transactions. The Employer Identification Number (EIN), issued by the Internal Revenue Service (IRS), was selected as the identifier for employers and was adopted effective July 30, 2002. The remaining identifiers are expected to be determined in the coming year.

Who is affected by HIPAA?

The law applies directly to three groups referred to as "covered entities."

- **Health Care Providers:** Any provider of medical or other health services, or supplies, who transmits any health information in electronic form in connection with a transaction for which standard requirements have been adopted.
- **Health Plans:** Any individual or group plan that provides or pays the cost of health care.
- **Health Care Clearinghouses:** A public or private entity that transforms health care transactions from one format to another.

HIPAA, however, indirectly affects many others in the health care field. For instance, software billing vendors and third party billing services that are not clearinghouses are not required to comply with the law; however, they may need to make changes in order to continue do business with someone who is "covered" by HIPAA.

TIP: Ask your billing or software vendor if they are ready for HIPAA.

HIPAA Deadlines

April 14, 2003 ***Privacy***

Deadline for compliance with privacy requirements.

April 16, 2003 ***Testing***

You should start testing your software no later than April 16, 2003.

October 16, 2003 ***Electronic Transactions & Code Sets Requirements***

Deadline for Compliance

April 21, 2005 ***Security***

Deadline for compliance with security requirements

First steps towards HIPAA compliance

If you have not been preparing for HIPAA, it is time to get started.

- ❑ Find out if HIPAA applies to you. Review the second paper in this series, "Are you a covered entity?"
- ❑ Call your health plans, payers and clearinghouse and ask about their HIPAA testing and HIPAA implementation plans.
- ❑ If you are using a billing service, find out if they are prepared for HIPAA.
- ❑ Talk with your provider associations about HIPAA.
- ❑ Find out about regional HIPAA efforts from your regional "Strategic National Implementation Process" (SNIP) representatives. They are local groups with extensive knowledge of HIPAA.

FOR MORE INFORMATION ABOUT HIPAA...

E-mail your questions to askhipaa@cms.hhs.gov or call our CMS HIPAA HOTLINE 1-866-282-0659

Log onto the CMS HIPAA web site: <http://www.cms.hhs.gov/hipaa/hipaa2>

Sign up to learn about the latest CMS Administrative Simplification outreach materials and events:
<http://list.nih.gov/archives/hipaa-outreach-l.html>

Sign up for our HIPAA Regulations ListServe for free email notification:
<http://www.aspe.hhs.gov/admsimp/lnotify.htm>

Find out about your local SNIP at:
<http://snip.wedi.org/public/articles/index.cfm?cat=5>